THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

June/July 2024 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Why Not Be Reasonable?

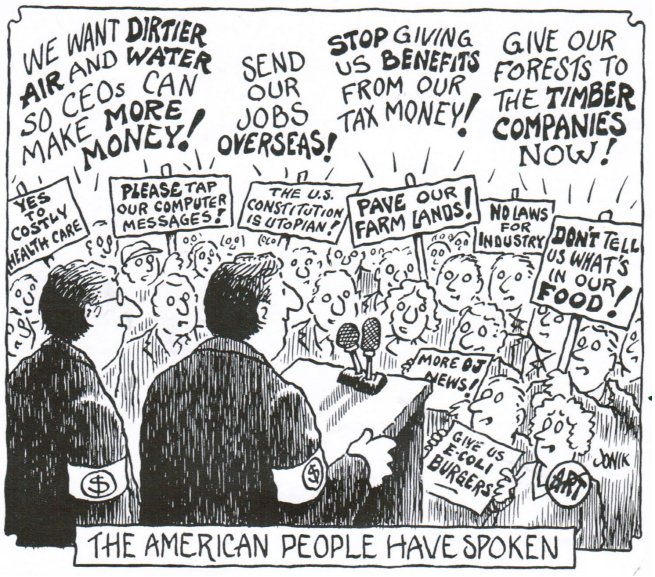
by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for president of the United States, opposes President Biden's proposal to drastically reduce tailpipe CO_2 emissions from cars over the next eight years. He calls conversion to electric vehicles (EVs) "job assassination." In 2019, Trump said the noise from windmills "caused cancer," and in 2023, he said turbines drove whales "crazy." In 2020, he said wind and solar power "would mean that America's seniors have no air conditioning during the summer, no heat during the winter, and no electricity during peak hours."

Not surprisingly, the fossil fuel industry wants to keep pumping oil and gas, even though its own researchers first predicted in the 1970s that continuked use of fossil fuels would have devastating environmental consequences. Obviously, it is in the economic interest of oil and gas conglomerates to sell their immensely profitable products as long as possible.

What is surprising, though, is the near-unanimous support Trump enjoys for his anti-environmental policies up and down the Republican party. I can still remember times when national emergencies were not partisan issues. Liberals and conservatives either cooperated or competed with each other to introduce policies which saved American lives. Approaches varied, but no one denied the need to address things like the Spanish flu. People did not cheer policies which harm the future and increase costs.

After we began welcoming guests to the Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker in 1987, we experienced high electric bills predominantly caused by as many as twelve people a day taking hot showers. To address this problem, we had a passive solar hot water system erected on the flat section of our roof. It cost $1,500 to install and pennies to operate. A small pump sends anti-freeze up to the roof where it travels up and down a large black panel before returning to our basement and heating our water, which comes into our house from the street at about 50° all year round. Five months a year, we get 120° water for free, and, even in the dead of winter, the system raises the base water


WE WANT DIRTIER AIR AND WATER SO CEOs CAN MAKE MORE MONEY!
SEND OUR JOBS OVERSEAS!
STOP GIVING US BENEFITS FROM OUR TAX MONEY!
GIVE OUR FORESTS TO THE TIMBER COMPANIES NOW!
YES TO COSTLY HEALTH CARE
PLEASE TAP OUR COMPUTER MESSAGES!
THE U.S. CONSTITUTION IS UTOPIAN!
PAVE OUR FARM LANDS!
NO LAWS FOR INDUSTRY
DON'T TELL US WHAT'S IN OUR FOOD!
MORE OJ NEWS!
GIVE US E-COLI BURGERS!
JONIK
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN

John Jonik

(Continued on Page 2)

Gaza History

by Dana Sajdi

Editor's Note: Dana Sajdi is an author and associate professor of history at Boston College. She gave us permission to print the following from a presentation she gave on campus.

A protester called Katya is demonstrating against the entry of humanitarian aid to Gaza. What is disturbing is not so much her effort to limit aid to a demonstrably starving people, more than half of them children, but how she'd only allow "the minimum number of calories needed for them to survive." This calculated statement by an average Israeli citizen deprives a population of 2.1 million people of any surfeit of food. It keeps them on the brink. Katya is able to think this because, in Israeli discourse, Gazans are sub-humans in a "maximum-security prison," who are kept barely alive, who must do their utmost to just survive.

The idea of a Jewish nation-state, Zionism, arose in the late 19th century as a response to pogroms in Russia and anti-Semitism in Europe. Zionist leaders saw Palestine as the most suitable location for that nation-state, given Jewish collective memory of the Land of Israel.

During World War I, the British made a promise to the leaders of the Zionist movement. In 1917, British Foreign Secretary, Lord Arthur Balfour declared:

His Majesty's Government views with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing may prejudice the civil and religious rights

(Continued on Page 4)

Reasonable

(Continued from Page 1)

temperature to 80°, saving us considerable money. Our electric bill dropped $60 a month. We've had the system ever since. It's paid for itself many times over.

Several years ago, we installed photovoltaic solar panels on the slanted sections of our roof. Four months a year, we pay nothing to the electric company. In five more years, the system will pay for itself.

More than 15 years ago, we bought a Toyota Prius hybrid car. Critics warned us that the battery would fail at 100,000 miles and cost many thousands to replace. We drove our Prius for over 200,000 miles, when body rust forced us to take it off the road, but, even then, the battery was strong. We consistently enjoyed 45-55 miles per gallon efficiency, much better than our prior conventional sedan.

In 2022, we bought a Nissan Leaf electric vehicle. Since then, we have driven the car 4,600 miles and paid only $65 to charge it, saving us $1,430 on what we would have paid for gas with a Prius. And since an EV has no oil, transmission fluid, muffler, carburetor, and many other things that are in a traditional car, we have already saved $1,000 on service. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates we will save more than $6,000 over the life-time of the car, but I suspect, by our frequent use of free chargers, we will save that much in three years.

In a March 25, article in *The Boston Globe*, Dwayne Breger, director of the Clean Energy Extension a the University of Massachusetts Amherst, said Massachusetts' plan to require all new cars sold by 2035 to be EVs will encourage "a great variety of electric vehicles to choose from, and hopefully lower costs as well." He went on to say, "Once people drive an electric vehicle, they recognize how nice of a technology it is and how in many ways it's a step up."

But even if you don't believe in or don't give a damn about the environmental impact of climate change— droughts, floods, deadly heat waves, etc.— I would think anyone, regardless of political philosophy, would want to save money. Why in the world would anyone campaign to flush money down the toilet? It seems completely irrational.

Of course, most moral actions require self-sacrifice. In the face of an emergency need, I like to think most people would find the courage to take up those challenges. Thankfully, addressing many crises only involves small sacrifices, inconveniences like like wearing a face mask to prevent the spread of infections like Covid.

In the case of green energy, though, lives can be saved with a financial investment, often is subsidized by the government and ultimately saves money. It's a win-win situation. Given the party's history of economic frugality, Republican opposition mystifies me.

Texas' Republican governor Greg Abbot blamed wind and solar for power shortages during the winter of 2021. At that time, the state derived only 20% of its power from green energy, but, since then, the conservative Republican has quietly changed course and doubled green energy without another power shortfall.

Sometimes we assume change is evil and newfangled gadgets are concocted only to get us to spend more money replacing perfectly serviceable products. But in the face of an existential threat like climate change, innovation strikes me as a vital life-raft rather than a Trojan horse. Ω

Criminalizing Works of Mercy

Right-wing pundits and politicians, using deceitful, derogatory, and inflammatory characterizations of immigrants, are attacking Catholic Charities across the nation for its service to migrants. This rhetoric has prompted hundreds of obscene and threatening phone calls. Tony Stieritz, CEO of Catholic Charities Southwestern Ohio, told *The National Catholic Reporter* that his 800 volunteers "will stand resolute in serving the poor and vulnerable regardless of where they come from." San Diego Cardinal Robert McElroy condemned the "assault" on Catholic Charities for doing work "the Lord commands."

Rita Corbin

Presumptive Republican nominee for president, Donald Trump calls migrants "animals" who are "poisoning the blood of our country." Provoked by such racism, polls now say turning back immigrants is a widespread American desire.

But Louise Zwick of the Houston Catholic Worker told *Commonweal* in 2021: "There is a tendency among those unacquainted with immigrants or the poor to fear them—or see them as a threat— even as they suffer hunger and uprootedness from everything they know. To hear them disparaged... makes us want to cry out with Léon Bloy: 'Christ is the center of all things.... He suffers all things. It is impossible to strike a human being without striking Him....'" Ω

Vol. 40, No. 6 **THE** **June/July 2024**

CATHOLIC **RADICAL**

Published on 100% eucalyptus paper every two months by:

The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community

52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610

Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089 Email:theresecw2@gmail.com

Founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Trouble Continues at Saint Vincent Hospital

by Raymond Mariano

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted with the author's permission from The Worcester Telegram *(3/24/24).*

I thought they had settled this. After a 30-day nurses' strike, I thought that the Saint Vincent Hospital administration and its nurses had agreed to staffing that would make the hospital safe. When they signed an agreement on January 3, 2022, I thought that issues of patient safety were behind them. Unfortunately, according to some nurses at the hospital, that's not the case.

Over a six-month period, starting July 1, 2023, nurses at the hospital filed more than 600 complaints citing serious deficiencies and increasingly dangerous conditions at the hospital—most relating directly to insufficient staffing. After getting nowhere with hospital administration, the nurses union filed complaints with several state and federal regulatory agencies.

For most of us, going through the complaints and trying to understand the value of things like cardiac telemetry boxes and the number of nurses assigned to a particular unit can be hard to evaluate. But one of the nurses described their concerns in straightforward language.

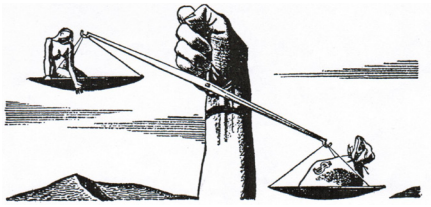
At a January press conference announcing that their complaints had been sent to state and federal agencies, Malena Pellegrino, a nurse at the hospital for 37 years, spelled out the problems simply. She said that "on too many days and too many shifts, too many patients were being left unattended and unmonitored. Too many patients were not receiving their medications on time or at all."

I admit that I cringed when she said that "too many patients were left to lie for hours soiled in their own urine and feces." She reported that far too many are placed at risk for preventable bedsores and infections. Then she asserted that "tragically, some are dying from want of care from one of our nurses."

According to the Massachusetts Nurses Association, there have been nights in the emergency department when only four nurses were responsible for more than 100 patients, including critically ill patients, some at risk of suicide or who were potentially violent.

These are incredibly serious charges.

The nurses filed complaints with the Department of Public Health Division of Healthcare Quality, the Joint Commission, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Nursing. The Joint Commission, which accredits acute care hospitals, conducted an on-site review in February and found the hospital "to be noncompliant with applicable Centers for Medicare Services Conditions." Ultimately, that could put the hospital's accreditation in jeopardy. Additionally, Joint Commission



Rockwell Kent

investigators from the Department of Public Health are looking into complaints involving incidents of patient harm.

Since their initial press conference in January, nurses have filed more than 100 additional reports alleging unsafe conditions, bringing the total to more than 700—every one of them is a cry for help for patients who rely on nurses for care.

So how does the hospital administration respond to these serious concerns? Well, I called the hospital's CEO, Carolyn Jackson, for her side of the story. Guess who never returned my call?

But I do know that Jackson's initial reaction to the complaints was to start firing some of the nurses who complained. First, she fired Marie Ritacco, a nurse with more than 40 years experience serving the patients at Saint Vincent. It's no coincidence that Ritacco was a vocal leader during the nurses' strike and that she handled contract grievances for nurses in the months after the strike ended.

An independent arbitrator wasn't fooled and ruled the firing was unjustified and "an act of punishment and thinly veiled retaliation." The hospital was ordered to reinstate Ritacco.

That didn't slow Jackson down. Last month, after the nurses filed their complaints with the Board of Registration in Nursing and other agencies, three nurses in the emergency department involved with filing the complaints were fired. Then six more nurses, including the co-chair of the nurse's bargaining unit, were suspended without pay. They all had objected to unsafe conditions for their patients. Ultimately, the hospital terminated the six nurses who had been suspended....

In 2020, Tenet [St. Vincent's corporate owner] and an affiliated hospital agreed to pay $1.41 million "to resolve allegations that they violated the False Claims Act by knowingly charging Medicare for implanting unnecessary cardiac monitors."

In 2016, Tenet and two of its subsidiaries were forced to pay $513 million "to resolve criminal charges and civil claims related to a scheme to defraud the United States and (for paying) kickbacks in exchange for patient referrals."

Consumer Watchdog published a story titled "Profile of a Repeat Offender: Tenet Healthcare Corporation." According to the story, Tenet pleaded guilty "to federal conspiracy charges for paying kickbacks and bribes to doctors." It paid $375 million to settle the charges,

But all of that is small potatoes. According to online reports, Tenet posted a gross profit of $16.9 billion in 2023 with an operating income of $2.4 billion. Not bad for a company with such a dubious record.

So Tenet keeps making billions while nurses struggle to reach patients who need their care. And the cash register couldn't be happier. Ω

Editor's Note: On April 11, the National Labor Relations Board filed a complaint against Saint Vincent Hospital for violation of the rights of union nurses who claimed unsafe working conditions. A federal trial is scheduled for June 18 in Boston.

History

(Continued from Page 1)

of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine.....

This unnamed "non-Jewish" people constituted 85% of the population of Palestine at the time, and they were majority Muslim with a substantial Christian minority, most of whom spoke Arabic. The refusal to give any attribute to this community is a colonial move *par excellence*.

European Jews migrated to Palestine in waves starting at the end of the 19th century and continued into the 20th century. Lands purchased by Jews could only be worked by and sold to Jews. This had the consequence of the removal of Palestinian peasants who lost the right to cultivate land as they had done historically. Although Jewish land purchases never exceeded 6% of Palestine, peasant displacement and pauperization became a phenomenon.

In 1936, Arab Palestine employed strikes, civil disobedience, and attacks on British and Zionist targets. The reaction of the British was swift and brutal. They deployed an army of 20,000 against about 2,000 insurgents. They employed executions, collective punishment, administrative detentions, and home demolitions, strategies that are familiar to Palestinians today. Throughout the revolt it is estimated that the death toll was 37 British people, 80 Jews, and 1,000 Palestinians.

The rise of Nazi Germany increased the need of a refuge for Jews, especially after Europe and the US closed their doors to Jewish immigrants. So, both legal and illegal immigration increased, and Arabs got more alarmed by the number of Jewish colonists who were refugees.

In the 1940s, it was Jewish agitation rather than its Arab counterpart that shook Palestine, most famously in the bombing of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem in 1947. Soon afterward, the British withdrew from Palestine and handed it over to the UN. Both Arab and Zionist communities prepared for war.

In 1947, the UN Security Council voted to partition Palestine into two states, one Arab and the other Jewish. The Arabs rejected the resolution, which gave the Jews, who made up only a third of the population, more than half of the land including, the most fertile coastal plain.

Civil war ensued. In 1948, Israel proclaimed itself a state. Five rather small and uncoordinated Arab armies, each with its own ambitions, fought the nascent Jewish state. This war lasted till 1949.

Israelis call it the War of Independence and the Palestinians call it *al-Nakba*, the Catastrophe. During the the war, 750,000 Palestinians were expelled or fled from their homes due to massacres, rumors of massacres, and psychological warfare.

Not only were Palestinians displaced, but the armistice lines, drawn at the end of the war, resulted in an enlarged Israel.

It is estimated that only 100,000 Palestinians remained in Israel. Two million of their descendants, 21% of the population of today's Israel, are citizens. The remaining area was immediately annexed by Jordan with a West Bank and an East Bank. It transpired that Jordan had colluded with the Israelis in advance. The other area, what became the Gaza Strip, was given to the protection of Egypt.

The Gaza Strip, 41 kilometers long and between 6 and 12 kilometers wide, quadrupled its population with refugees. These Palestinians understood that they would return to their homes and lands once the war ended. Indeed, in 1948, there was a UN Security Council resolution calling for the Palestinian refugees' right of return. But the new Israeli state adopted denial of refugees' right to return, first as policy, then as law. The houses, businesses, and land of these 750,000 were declared "Absentee Property" and confiscated wholesale. Numerous Palestinian villages were levelled. Israel wanted the most land with the least number of Palestinians, who were seen as a demographic threat and had to be ethnically cleansed.

The refugee population of the Gaza Strip is concentrated in eight refugee camps from north to south: Jabalya, al-Shati, al-Breij, al-Nseirat, Dri al-Balah, Khan Yunus, and Rafah. The refugees depended on the newly established United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA), for most necesities. UNWRA established schools and many other services. en route to becoming one of the largest employers of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. In January, the US and seven other countries stopped funding UNRWA because of an unsubstantiated Israeli allegation that 8 out of 30,000 UNWRA employees belonged to Hamas.

But to return to the Gaza Strip. According to historian Beshara Doumani, the Strip became the cauldron of Palestinian politics. It is from the Gaza Strip that three of the founders of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) came. It is where the first *Intifada*, a popular and largely peaceful uprising against Israeli occupation took place, from 1987 to 1993. It is also here where Hamas was established in the late 1980s. It is here that the second and much more violent *Intifada* began in the 2000s. It is also here in 2018 where the Great March of Return, an predominantly peaceful movement in which Gazans walked towards the gates of their prison, to be met by Israeli sniper fire that maimed and killed many of them.

In 1956, as a part of the Suez Crisis, Israel occupied Gaza for four months. During that time, Israel committed a series of massacres in Khan Yunus, Gaza City, and Rafah. These events are illustrated in Joe Sacco's book, **Footnotes in Gaza**.

Then came the 1967 Six Day War that began because of Cold War rumors that Egyptian President Nasser planned to bar Israel from the Suez Canal. In this war, Israel swiftly beat Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. This resulted in Israel's military occupation of Gaza and the Sinai from Egypt, the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank including East Jerusalem and the holy sites from Jordan. In violation

of UN Security Council Resolution 242 that states the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by war, Israel annexed East Jerusalem and made it its capital and continues to militarily occupy the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and, in a different way, Gaza. What is more, from the 1970s on, Israel established illegal Jewish settlements in Gaza and the West Bank and continues to build them today. Currently, the Palestinian population of the West Bank is estimated at nearly 3 million. The Jewish settler population exceedes half a million.

During the first *Intifada*, Palestinians held daily strikes and errected road blocks to slow Israeli armored vehicles. They also hoisted flags, painted slogans, and held protests. Famously or infamously, children threw stones at soldiers. Israel reacted by incarcerating, often without charge, 175,000 Palestinians. They tortured 23,000. They injured 30,000 children, a third with broken bones. The death toll was 607 Palestinians and 21 Israelis, 9 of them civilians.

In 1993, the Oslo Peace Process began. The negotiations between the PLO and Israel failed miserably by the year 2000. Rather than being the road to peace and the establishment of a state for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, the agreement divided the West Bank into three parts: Palestinian control of large and impoverished cities, joint Israeli and Palestinian control over villages, and full Israei control of all the rest. During the negotiations and after, Israeli settlements in the West Bank doubled. Oslo resulted in the concentration of Palestinians in closed-off territories without any contiguity, making a state impossible. It deprived them of free access to each other and Gaza. A checkpoint system controls Palestinian movement, while Jewish-only by-pass roads crisscrossing the West Bank assure the convenience of settlers. Ultimately, Israel constructed a massive 9-meter-high concrete separation barrier.

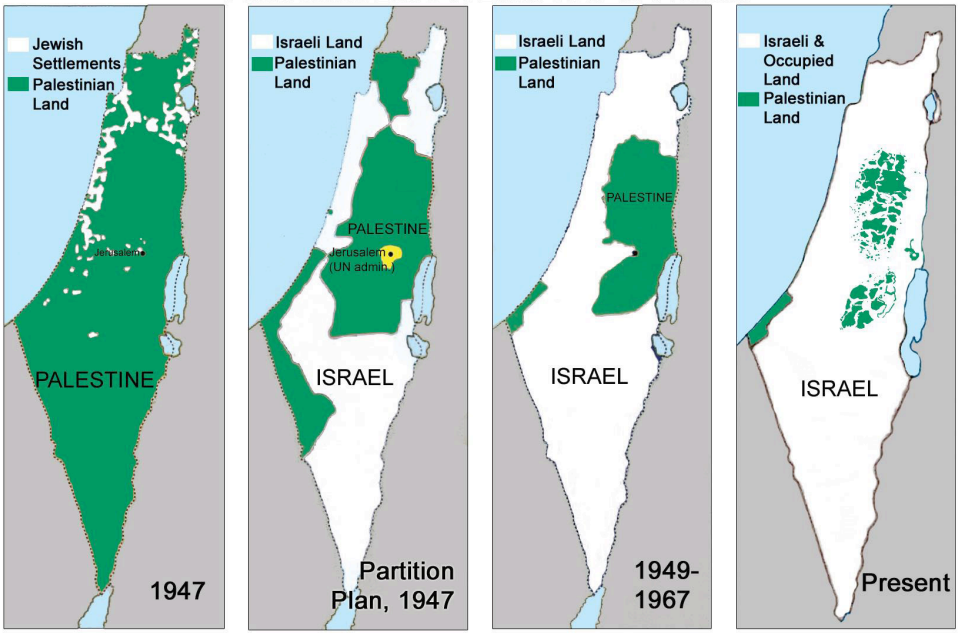
In 1991, Israel began a system whereby Palestinians were unable to leave Gaza without a special permit from the Israeli authorities. In 1993, Israel built a barbed wire fence around Gaza and began a policy of closures. Gaza's economy had been completely integrated into Israel with 70% of Gazans providing the cheapest labor. The closures resulted in what Sara Roy of Harvard calls "the de-deevelopment of Gaza." The economic enclavization paralleled the bantustanization that was taking place in the West Bank. By 1996, most households in Gaza had to sell jewelry or dip into savings to buy food.

It is under these circumstances that Hamas started its horrendous bombings of civilians inside Israel with about 138 suicide attacks between 2000-2005 killing 1,038 Israelis. In the same period, Israel destroyed more than 10% of Gaza's agricultural land, uprooting over a quarter million trees. In 1998, under Oslo, Gaza was allowed to build an airport. It was bombed in 2000. A port constructed with Dutch-French cooperation was destroyed in 2002. By the end of 2005, 3,000 Palestinians were killed and 4,000 Palestinian homes were destroyed.

In 2005, Israel announced that it would unilaterally withdraw from Gaza. They dismantled the settlements, which housed 6,000 Israeli civilians, and pulled out their troops. However, they retained control of the water, electricity, telecommunications, airspace, coastal waters, and land access points in and out of Gaza (except for the Rafah border with Egypt). In 2006, in the first democratic legislative elections for Palestinians, Hamas won in Gaza. This success was partly in response to the failure of the Palestinian Authority at Oslo and to its general corruption. Hamas has run Gaza internally since.

Upon the election of Hamas, in 2005, Israel imposed a blockade on goods going in and out, a blockade which remains today. Banned materials included concrete, steel, wood, paint, doors, pipes, lentils, pasta, tomato paste, parsley, hearing aids, crayons, and more. In this setting, the population turned to tunnels, mainly under Rafah to Egypt, to smuggle basic necessities [and weapons].

Palestinian Loss of Land 1947 to Present



In 2012, a leaked document showed that the Israeli Defense Ministry had calculated the individual Gazan's daily caloric intake needed to avoid malnutrition during the blockade. A bit earlier, another leaked document quotes an Israeli diplomat saying that Gaza's economy "had to be kept on the brink of collapse." (*The Guardian*, Oct 17, 2012). The domination of Gazans is absolute, depriving them of any politics except that of survival. Today, most discussion is not about Gazan freedom, but about the delivery of aid. And it is this circumstance,which allows someone like Katya, the demonstrator we saw at the start of the presentation, to display an absolute lack of sympathy,

(Continued on Page 7)

under the rubble

by Jim Consedine

Our house in Gaza fell on me
I didn't actually see it fall
but I heard the bombs coming
whining through the night
then boom bang, a giant shudder
everything went dark and dizzy

I was in the top bunk
my brother Malik underneath
he had been asleep
I was awake, frightened, scared
I look out for him on bomb nights
'cos I'm six, he's only four

first the roof and chimney fell
then the walls crashed in
I briefly saw the man in the moon
about a mile away in the sky
he was crying
my guts spilled out everywhere
I remember screaming
then my head was squashed
the pain was really bad
I couldn't breathe

my new school bag
hanging on the bedpost
was destroyed too
I'm not sure why
it had only books in it Ω

Editor's Note: Reprinted with permission from The Common Good*, the newsletter of Christchurch, New Zealand's Catholic Worker community.*

"War's End" Howard Brodie

Poem for stillness

by Garous Abdolmalekian

He stirs his tea with a gun barrel
He solves the puzzle with a gun barrel
He scratches his thoughts with a gun barrel

And sometimes
he sits facing himself
and pulls bullet-memories
out of his brain

He's fought in many wars
but is no match for his own despair
These white pills
have left him so colourless
his shadow must stand up
to fetch him water

We ought to accept
that no soldier
has ever returned
from war
alive Ω

Editor's Note: Garous Abdolmalekian is Iranian born in 1980.

History

(Continued from Page 5)

which empowers her to declare that other humans are to be fed only enough to be kept alive.

Gaza had been described as a panopticon, Jeremy Bentham's design of the prison where the inmates are seen at all times. Everyone is observed through biometric identity cards, Palestinian census data, surveillance zeppelins, remote control robotics, and machine gun towers.

In his recent book, **The Palestine Laboratory: How Israel Exports the Technology of Occupation Around the World**, Anthony Lowenstein explains how the barbed wire fence around Gaza is under constant drone surveillance. Lowenstein says, "Gaza is now the perfect laboratory for Israeli ingenuity in domination and keeping Palestinians indefinitely imprisoned." An Israeli colonel bragged that "killing or injuring Palestinians should be as easy as ordering a pizza."

The most important port city of the Eastern Mediterranean is now a laboratory not only for Israeli high-tech arms but also for the capacity of a completely dominated and dehumanized people to attempt to live in freedom and dignity and to call for equality. I think of Rifaat al-Areer, a professor of comparative literature, who wrote, "If I must die, you must live on to tell a story," and was killed in a targeted strike on his home. And Dina Abu Muheissen, a 12-year-old who lost her leg when her home was destroyed and was then killed in bed at al-Nasser hospital. And Lubna Alayyan, 14-year-old, a prodigal violinist who died under the rubble of her apartment building, and Elham Farah, an 84-year-old renowned piano teacher, who was sniped as she walked outside Gaza's Holy Family Church. Despite all the obstacles, these people worked hard to improve themselves and their community. Gaza's culture is *of* life and *for* life. The place is being intentionally rendered uninhabitable; unsuitable for life. Ω

Letters

Hi, Scott,
I loved the tongue-in-cheek article about Joe Biden and Father Steve Kelly in the latest *Catholic Radical*.

It brought to mind the gathering of Catholic Workers in Las Vegas a few years ago where Mary Jo and I met you and Claire and Father Kelly, among many other wonderful people. I vividly remember Father Kelly saying Mass at the Nevada Test Site wearing his priestly garments over an orange prison jump suit. He met us again a few years later in San Diego (before another of his terms in prison) and helped distribute ponchos during one of our rare rainstorms in California. His dedication has continued to be an inspiration to me. To borrow a word from my Jewish friends, he is a MENSCH!

Jim Thomas
San Diego Catholic Worker

Scott,
I loved your "Musings" about the Camino de Santiago in your April/May newsletter. I went in 2016 at age 70 and did the whole 500 miles. I actually wrote about it in your newsletter and spoke about it at your CW house.

It was a wonderful experience, inspiring and uplifting. It gives you time to think about your life, what you missed, and what brings you joy.

I returned and eventually decided to give my cottage on Cape Cod to the Mashpee Wampanoag. It took a few years after the Camino to figure out, but sometimes the Camino has long term effects on your life. It was a big deal for me. I hope you go. Best of luck if you do.

Craig Simpson
Dorchester, Massacusetts

Kate Hennessy

Catholic Worker Calendar

June 4 & 18, July 10 & 24— Evening Prayer: Prayer will still be held while Claire and Scott Schaeffer-Duffy are walking the Camino de Santiago in France and Spain. So please come join Brian and Sam for silent meditation, prayer, and Taizé chant at 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow. 7:00 PM.

Mason Street Musings

In less than three weeks, Scott and I leave to walk the Camino de Santiago. I am a born procrastinator. Instead of working through my monumental to-do list, I find myself scrolling youtube clips for the latest updates on the student encampment at Columbia University. I can't help myself. Columbia is our daughter Grace's alma mater, and what is happening there is too riveting and hope-filled to ignore.

Perhaps you too are following the story. On April 17th, while a congressional panel subjected Columbia University president Minouche Shafik to a farcical, McCarthy-like grilling on anti-semitism at elite colleges, a coalition of students, anguished over the genocide in Gaza, set up an encampment to protest the war. The next day, at the request of Shafik, police dismantled the camp and arrested more than 100 activists. No sooner had they done so, than students set up another encampment, this one bigger and more organized than the first. Within the week, encampments and marches, protesting the war on Gaza, began cropping up at colleges and universities across the country.

This upsurge of youth-led activism came as the House and Senate, in an act of staggering cruelty, voted to send an

Rita Corbin

additional $26 billion in aid to Israel, much of it for weaponry. The war in Gaza has killed upwards to 14,000 children and left the living young orphaned, maimed, and without hope for a future. Using bombs made and paid for in America, Israeli forces have destroyed 56 of Gaza's 70 schools, two thirds of its hospitals, all the universities, and severely restricted access to humanitarian aid to starving Palestinians.

The student activists want no part in a world that deems whole categories of people expendable. Many are calling on their institutions to divest from companies facilitating Israel's obliteration of Gaza. For their empathy, students have been denounced as "terrorists" and "outside agitators." They have been suspended, evicted from campus, and arrested. Sometimes brutally. Boston police were so aggressive removing Emerson College students from their protests that activists are now demanding an end to the Deadly Exchange training program of the Boston Police Department by Israel.

All power, violently held, requires repression. Beautiful to see is the collective courage offered in response. When it was rumored Columbia's administration might call in the National Guard to disperse the second camp—a tactic US Speaker of the House Mike Johnson recommended—faculty and students came in by the hundreds to protect it. Student activists at Georgia's Emory University turned "outside agitators" into a badge of honor, noting segregationist governors used the same term to dismiss the Freedom Riders of the 1960s who came South to advocate for Black civil rights. "The mask is off," friends say. The brutality of American Power is being revealed but so too is American capacity for nonviolence.

It will feel strange to leave the turmoil and the incessant screen scrolling for the roadways of northern Spain, hard to leave our growing community of friends working to end the war. Scott and I are so grateful to Sam Leuschner and Brian Ashmankas for their willingness to mind house and garden while we are away. We are grateful for those friends bringing meals and praying for us. We will think of all of you as we walk and pray, walk and pray a whopping 500 miles. Can we do it? God only knows. Stay human, everyone. Ω

Claire

SS. Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA, USA 01610
(508) 753-3588 & (508) 753-3089

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WORCESTER, MA
PERMIT NO. 271